



Richard J. Codey, Acting Governor • DECEMBER 2005 • Rolando Torres, Jr., Commissioner

### Commissioner Torres honored with Spirit of the Y Award



Commissioner Torres accepts the "Spirit of the Y" Award from Mel Hill, President of the statewide NJ YMCA Alliance.

NJ Personnel Commissioner Rolando Torres, Jr., was honored with the Spirit of the Y Award, presented by the NJ-YMCA Alliance at the annual YMCA State Alliance Public Policy Awards Dinner held in Monroe, NJ, in October.

The Spirit of the Y Award recognizes the commitment demonstrated by actions that a "healthy spirit, mind and body" are at the core of strong families and strong communities.

"This is a significant award to me, because the Spirit of the Y is one which I try to embody in both my professional and personal life," said Commissioner Torres. "I commend the NJ-YMCA Alliance for mobilizing communities across New Jersey to get active and take command of their health. All too many Americans are inactive, overweight, and at risk for a myriad of diseases. I am proud that through a new partnership, the State of New Jersey will partner with the YMCA Alliance to help build a stronger, healthier State."

## More than 1,000 take part in WWNJ walk and fitness challenge



Commissioner Torres crosses the finish line with Dr. Alma Joseph, Department of Human Services Assistant Commissioner, and Dr. Jeff Levine, Director of Womens Health, Robert Wood Johnson Hospital and contestant on NBC's Biggest Loser Program, at the 1st Annual Working Well NJ Fitness Challenge, Walk & Rally.

More than 1,000 State workers took part in *Working Well New Jersey's* first state-wide walk and fitness challenge on October 28.

The event was part of an ongoing campaign focused on public employee health and wellness that is sponsored by the New Jersey Departments of Personnel (NJDP) and Health and Senior Services (NJHSS).

*Working Well NJ* was created to educate and encourage public employee health and wellness through a series of events and informational sessions. The one-mile walk, aimed at encouraging public workers to incorporate a fitness program into their daily lives, kicks off a six-week Fitness Challenge.

As part of the campaign, each State department is encouraging its employees to make a commitment to fitness. The department with the highest percentage of participants will receive an award from the Governor next spring.

"We're challenging government employees to take their health into their own hands and to exercise just 30 minutes a day over the next six weeks," said NJDP Commissioner Rolando Torres, Jr.

"We started *Working Well NJ* because it is State government's mission to make New Jersey a safe and healthy place to live, and by

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This November marked the 29th year that the American Cancer Society sponsored its Great American Smokeout celebration. Its purpose is to bring awareness of the importance of quitting smoking to the public by asking smokers to quit for a 24-hour period.

The hope is, of course, that many of those who quit for one day will see that they can quit forever — freeing them from the cost of cigarettes, both financially and health-wise.

The attention the Great American Smokeout has drawn to the dangers of smoking and the issue of second hand smoke has helped change the way Americans think about smoking. As a result of that changed thinking, many states and municipalities have banned smoking and established programs that continue to save lives.

This year's Smokeout included the launch of a website, [www.cancer.org/live-freesmokefree](http://www.cancer.org/live-freesmokefree), that offers help to adults and teens who want to be smoke free.

New Jersey has joined many other states in banning smoking from many public areas, including all State government offices.

The NJ Department of Health and Senior Services also offers help to those who want to be smoke free. Please visit their website at: [www.NJQuit2Win.com](http://www.NJQuit2Win.com).

Acting Gov. Codey has announced that he plans to work on legislation during the last two months of his term to complete the ban on all smoking in places open to the public. This way the State protects those who do not smoke from the effects of second-hand smoke in the workplace, at schools, at recreational facilities, and in restaurants.

If you smoke, join the growing number of ex-smokers — for your health's sake.



## Protect your family

DID YOU KNOW THAT SMOKING  
IS THE #1 PREVENTABLE CAUSE OF DEATH?

DID YOU KNOW THAT HEALING RATES  
FOR CERTAIN SURGICAL PROCEDURES ARE AS HIGH AS SIX TIMES  
FASTER WHEN CURRENT SMOKERS STOP SMOKING  
SHORTLY BEFORE THE PROCEDURE?

*Working Well New Jersey* encourages you to visit **NJQuit2Win.com**, the nationally acclaimed smoking cessation toolbox that will provide you with life-saving information for you and your family.

Learn critical tips on how you can quit or help someone you love quit with free counseling and informational resources.

Learn about:

- Free 24 hour counseling and referral services
- Counselors trained by the Mayo Foundation
- Advice on nicotine replacement therapies
- Chat lines and online peer support
- Quit calendar and other quitting tools and strategies

### *Fitness challenge,* *continued from page 1*

getting healthier ourselves, we can encourage others to incorporate lifestyle choices that will improve their lives and the lives of their families," said NJDHSS Commissioner Fred M. Jacobs, M.D., J.D. "Just a small amount of exercise can help you lose weight, reduce the likelihood of heart disease, and even prevent or delay the onset of Type II Diabetes by three years or more."

A critical component of WWNJ is the alliances it has made with some of the largest and most highly regarded non-profit health agencies in the country, including the American Cancer Society, the American Diabetes Association, the YMCA Statewide Alliance. Many of these partners were on-site to offer valuable wellness information to participants in the Fitness Challenge.

The Walk and Fitness Challenge is the latest in a series of initiatives from the WWNJ campaign. Since its inception, it has sponsored informational sessions for employees in many



*Dr. Jeff Levine, Joanne Smith-Tavener, Wellness Coordinator, NJ State Police, and Commissioner Torres led the Walk.*

state agencies on issues such as arthritis, diabetes, skin cancer, breast cancer, and stroke prevention. WWNJ offers a speaker's bureau, a coordinated master calendar of wellness events, e-bulletins, and access to all of the wellness partners.

In coordination with the October Walk and Fitness Challenge, agencies outside of Trenton also hosted walks. Among them were the NJ Board of Public Utilities; the Department of Corrections in 12 facilities; the Department of Human Services in two locations; the Department of Transportation; and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in two locations.

## Why fitness is important

Regular exercise can play a key role in reducing your risk of medical problems and in decreasing your ultimate costs for health care.

Despite the fact that 25 percent of all Americans lead a sedentary lifestyle, the need for and the value of exercising on a regular basis are irrefutable facts of life (and death).

In addition, Americans spend more than \$600 billion dollars annually for health care. This figure translates into almost \$3,000 for each American.

A list of the medical problems and health-related conditions that can be at least partially treated and controlled by exercise would be extensive.

Among the most significant and the manner in which exercise is thought to help alleviate each condition are the following:

**Anxiety.** Exercise triggers the release of mood-altering chemicals in the brain.

**Arthritis.** By forcing a skeletal joint to move, exercise induces the manufacture of synovial fluid and helps to distribute it over the cartilage and to force it to circulate throughout the joint space.

**Back Pain.** Exercise helps to both strengthen the abdominal muscles and the lower back extensor muscles and stretch the hamstring muscles.

**Cholesterol.** Exercise will raise your level of HDL (the "good" cholesterol) in the blood and help lower your level of LDL—the undesirable lipoprotein.

**Depression.** Exercise helps speed metabolism and deliver more oxygen to the brain; the improved level of circulation in the brain tends to enhance your mood.

**Diabetes.** Exercise helps lower excess blood sugar levels, strengthen your muscles and heart, improve your circulation, and reduce stress.

**Fatigue.** Exercise can help alleviate the fatigue-causing effects of stress, poor circula-

tion and blood oxygenation, bad posture, and poor breathing habits.

**Headaches.** Exercise helps force the brain to secrete more of the body's opiate-like, pain-dampening chemicals (e.g., endorphins and enkephalins).

**Heart Disease.** Exercise helps promote many changes that collectively lower your risk of heart disease—a decrease in body fat, a decrease in LDL, an increase in the efficiency of the heart and lungs, a decrease in blood pressure, and a lowered heart rate.

**High Blood Pressure.** Exercise reduces the level of stress-related chemicals in the bloodstream that constrict arteries and veins, increases the release of endorphins,

raises the level of HDL in the bloodstream, lowers your resting heart rate (over time), improves the responsiveness of your blood vessels (over time), and helps reduce your blood pressure by keeping you leaner.

**Insomnia.** Exercise helps reduce muscular tension and stress.

**Menstrual Problems and PMS.** Exercise helps to control the hormonal imbalances often associated with PMS by increasing the release of beta-endorphins.

**Osteoporosis.** Exercise promotes bone density—thereby lowering an individual's risk of suffering a bone fracture.

**Overweight Problems.** Exercise suppresses your appetite, increases your metabolic rate, burns fat, increases lean muscle mass, and improves your level of self-esteem.

Are the positive effects that result from exercising regularly worth the required effort? Absolutely. Should you make exercise an integral part of your daily regimen? Of course, you should. In countless ways, your life may depend on it.

*The above story was taken from an article in the DMVA Highlights which was written by Ernie Razzano, Recruiter, Division of Veterans Healthcare Services.*



### UPCOMING WWNJ EVENTS

#### SMOKING CESSATION CAMPAIGN

- American Cancer Society
- NJ Department of Health
- Visit: [NJQUIT2WIN.com](http://NJQUIT2WIN.com)

### QUIT 2 WIN

TIME TO STOP • [NJQUIT2WIN.COM](http://NJQUIT2WIN.COM)

#### AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION

- Choose to Live Challenge
- Visit: [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)



#### DECEMBER

- Mental Health Month
- Stress Management Month
- Healthy Holiday Recipes

December 1: World AIDS Day



**To learn more about  
WORKING WELL NJ  
or to book an event  
at your department,  
please call Carrie Wynder at  
609-292-8217  
or visit [www.nj.gov/personnel](http://www.nj.gov/personnel)**



## Working Well NJ Healthy Autumn Recipes

These recipes are from *The New Family Cookbook for People with Diabetes*, published by the American Diabetes Association.

### BAKED ACORN SQUASH WITH APPLE STUFFING

Acorn squash is the most common member of the winter squash family. Its bright-orange flesh bakes beautifully and its pretty dark green and orange-streaked shell makes a perfect container for the delicious apple stuffing.

Number of servings: 4  
Serving size: ½ squash

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 acorn squash, halved and seeded
- 1 apple, peeled and diced
- 2 tablespoons celery, diced
- 2 tablespoons onion, diced
- 2 tsp. margarine, melted
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 pinch ground black pepper

#### PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Prepare a square baking pan with nonstick pan spray.
- 2) Place the squash cut side down in a baking pan. Bake for 20 minutes.
- 3) While the squash is baking, combine the apples, celery, onion, margarine, and 2 tablespoons water in a medium bowl; mix well.
- 4) Turn the squash cut sides up. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Divide the apple mixture to fill the cavities of the squash. Bake the stuffed squash halves, covered with foil, for 30 minutes more. Serve hot.

#### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

Exchanges Per Serving: 1 Starch  
Amount per serving:

- **87 calories**  
19 calories from fat
- **2 g total fat**  
0 g saturated fat
- **0 g cholesterol**
- **63 mg\* sodium**
- **18 g total carbohydrates**  
5 g dietary fiber  
10 g sugars
- **1 g protein**

### SWEET POTATO SOUFFLE

Number of servings: 6  
Serving size: ½ cup

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 lbs. sweet potatoes
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup raisins
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- ½ cup evaporated skim milk
- ⅓ cup low-calorie margarine
- 1 cup egg substitute
- ¼ cup chopped pecans
- ½ tsp. salt
- juice from fresh lemon
- ½ cup miniature marshmallows

#### PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Peel and boil the sweet potatoes. Heat the oven to 350 degrees F.
- 2) Drain and mash the potatoes. Place in a large bowl and add all ingredients. Stir well.
- 3) Spray a casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray. Place the mixture in the dish and bake for 30 minutes.
- 4) Change the oven setting to broil, sprinkle the marshmallows over the potatoes, and place under the broiler until the marshmallows melt.

#### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

Exchanges Per Serving: 3 carbohydrate; ½ fat  
Amount per serving:

- **238 Calories**  
38 calories from fat
- **0 mg cholesterol**
- **203 mg\* sodium**
- **46 g total carbohydrates**  
4 g dietary fiber  
29 g sugars
- **5 g protein**

From "Diabetes Recipes," developed by the FDA's Office of Women's Health and the National Association of Chain Drug Stores and the American Diabetes Association.

- Not appropriate for low sodium diets.